at large, under the proposal of a national or popular decree — a plebiscite. Those then living were amazed at the general apathy, only about three million votes having been cast. To us it appears as if the whole people were in a plague of Egyptian darkness. As each voter could but adhere to or dissent from the proposition for the adoption of the constitution as offered, the result was an overwhelming approval, the negative votes being only one thousand five hundred and sixty-seven in number.

On December twenty-second, before the result of the plebiscite was known, the new charter was put in operation. It is difficult to determine exactly the composition of the assembly which met at the Luxembourg palace to determine who should be the permanent consuls. According to an anecdote of the time, Sieyes opened its proceedings by explaining the dangers of a military despotism should the First Consul be a soldier. Bonaparte impressively whispered to his supporters that they should scatter themselves throughout the room, and that when they saw him take Sieyes's hand they should shout, "Bravo — Bonaparte!" Then, stepping forward at the close of Sieyes's address, he assumed an air of generous friendliness, and said, "Let us have no difference of opinion, my friend; for my part, I vote for the Abbe Sieyes. For whom do you vote?" Taken all aback, Sieyƒs murmured, "I vote for General Bonaparte." Instantly the latter put out his hand, and the speaker grasped it. "Bravo — Bonaparte!" rang from all sides, and Sieyes's supporters joined in the shout. Thus, apparently by general consent, the shrewd intriguer, as the story runs, was acclaimed First Consul. At all events, Bonaparte took the office to himself without a question on the part of the public. His two colleagues were to be chosen by the constitutional com-